

HOW TO GUIDE

DEVELOPING AN EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY

SOUTHERN DOWNS & GRANITE BELT EDITION





Southern Downs A great place to live, work, play and stay.

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G'DAY BONJOUR KONNICHIWA WELCOME

This "How To" Guide has been created to assist anyone new to marketing and particularly events who do not have a Marketing Strategy.

It may also assist those that do have a Marketing Strategy to update their existing strategy.

The aim of the guide is to offer a practical framework on the process and type of information to include so you can create your own tailored Marketing Strategy to help you achieve the goals and desired outcomes of your event.

Why we wrote this guide?

We are a small group of people who have lived, worked and breathed regional tourism and events over the past thirty years.

We have a genuine desire to make a difference for tourism and events in Australia, specifically for the benefit of tourism operators, event organisers, towns and regions.

We recognise the incredible economic, cultural and environmental contribution tourism and events can play, particularly in regional and remote communities.

Our personal commitment is to leave a positive, long-term legacy where we work and to show, no matter how small or remote a region, business event, town or city, quality, innovation and creativity can be delivered.

Here's to a great industry...and we hope this "How To" guide helps, even if just a little bit.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

Before commencing writing your Marketing Strategy, always "begin with the end in mind".

WHAT DO WE WANT OUR MARKETING TO ACHIEVE?

Understanding what you want your marketing to achieve is an important consideration, as each outcome will require a different strategy.

- Are you a new event?
- Are you trying to create event awareness?
- Are you trying to educate potential visitors about your event and program or visitor experience?
- Do your potential visitors know where you are?
- Are you marketing a 'save the date' or visit at a particular time?
- Do you want potential attendees to buy tickets or BOOK NOW?

THE CALL TO ACTION

When we consider what we want our marketing to achieve, we then need to understand what action we're asking potential customers and visitors to make. In marketing terms, it's known as the "call-toaction" i.e., are you asking visitors to mark a date in their diary, are you asking them follow/like you on Facebook, are you asking them to purchase a ticket, or head to your website to learn more about the program, your entertainment or visitor experience?

GATHER PREVIOUS MARKETING RESULTS

If you are an existing event, start your preparation with gathering as much information as possible about your event, your customers and previous marketing.

This could include:

- Examples of previous programs, posters, advertising
- Any results/feedback from previous marketing
- Customer feedback and online reviews
- Previous visitor survey results
- Ticketing and booking data

MARKETING CHECKLIST

Most importantly, before commencing, review your current marketing to identify any gaps or weaknesses which you many need to address in your marketing strategy.

Ideally, if you have a friend or colleague who is not involved in the event, ask them to also complete this checklist as a mystery shop for you.

RE	GIONAL COUNCIL GRANTS TO COMMUNITY LOCAL EVENTS FUNDING PROGRAM MORE RESOURCES				
	EVENT CALENDAR FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS & GRANITE BELT				
	EGIONAL ARTS VELOPMENT FUND LISTING YOUR EVENT ON ATOW EVENTS GUIDE				
	If you have difficulty finding your event online, use the FREE resources below by clicking on the buttons to register or access resource materials.				
	Am I listed on other event calendars and tourism websites, e.g. Local Council, Regional Tourism Organisation website, Queensland.com, Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)?				
	Can you purchase tickets and/or register for our event from our website, and how many clicks does it take to book or register?				
	Do we regularly create and share content throughout the year on our social media channels? (even if our event is annual or biennial)				
	Is our website linked to the social media channels?				
	Are social media and e-news registration linked from our website?				
	Can I easily see where our event located? How do I get there? Where do I stay?				
	Do our social media channels, website, posters and online listings look consistent and reflect our brand?				
	Is my website smart phone friendly? (What does it look like on your phone?)				
	Can I easily see What, Where, When + Why?				
	Can I easily see the date/s and year of our event on all marketing collateral and digital channels?				
	Is our event easily found in a Google search?				

DI

WHAT TO INCLUDE?

Every event Marketing Strategy is different, depending on what they need to achieve.

A typical table of contents for an event marketing strategy often includes the following areas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOURISM BUSINESS/ EVENT BACKGROUND

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

VISITOR INSIGHTS

UNIQUE SELLING POINT AND BRAND

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

TARGET MARKETS

MARKETING PRIORITIES

MONITORING

ACTION PLAN

MARKETING SCHEDULE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An executive summary provides a condensed version of the main document in short, clear paragraphs to grab the reader's attention. Although the executive summary is at the beginning of the document, it is written last. Ideally the executive summary should be no longer than one or two pages.

THE KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:





EVENT SNAPSHOT

How would you summarise your event, particularly for someone who's never been or experienced it before?

Think potential visitors, sponsors, grant providers, media, and don't assume they know where your town/city/region is or how to get to you.

EXAMPLE: HERE'S AN EVENT SNAPSHOT EXAMPLE (OF A FICTITIOUS FESTIVAL OF COURSE, BUT NOTE THE CONTENT AND THEMING OF THE CONTENT):

65-WORD DESCRIPTION

Established in 2001 to put our town on the map, the Medieval Festival celebrates all things medieval, from jousting tournaments to live Shakespeare performances.

Try your hand at Robyn Hood crafts, have a go at archery and feast like a king in the Castle Food Court.

The event attracts 8,000 visitors annually, generates more than \$1m in media publicity and creates a \$2m economic impact.

Dropbox

150-WORD DESCRIPTION

The Medieval Festival is staged annually in the town of Wooloolabah, in the picturesque country hinterland of Southern Queensland Country, just 90 minutes drive from Brisbane, with direct flights from Sydney and Melbourne.

Established in 2001 by a band of merry men and women to put our town on the map, the Medieval Festival celebrates all things medieval, from jousting tournaments to live Shakespeare performances.

Try your hand at Robyn Hood crafts, have a go at archery and feast like a king in the Castle Food Court.

Today, the event attracts 8,000 visitors annually, generates more than \$1m in media publicity and creates a \$2m economic impact for our region. We are an incorporated association with not-for-profit objectives and are supported by several strategic partners, including our local government council and Brothers Blacksmith Company.

To receive the latest information, sign-up to our e-newsletter, The Medieval Feast at **medievalfestival.com.au**. Tag and share us **@medievalfestival** and **#medievalfestival**.

Focus on the work that matters

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HINT: SAVE THE WORD DESCRIPTIONS OF YOUR EVENT, PROPERTY OR VISITOR EXPERIENCE FOR REPEATING ACROSS MEDIA RELEASES, BLOGS, EVENT CALENDARS, FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM DESCRIPTIONS ETC. BE SURE TO SAVE IT ON A CLOUD, SUCH AS DROPBOX, SO YOU CAN EASILY SHARE WITH OTHER EVENT MEMBERS AND MEDIA. IT'S SO HANDY WHEN YOU RECEIVE LAST MINUTE, URGENT REQUESTS FOR COPY OR INFORMATION ON YOUR EVENT.

EVENT BACKGROUND

An event background provides an understanding of the why the event was created, its purpose and soul.

Whether you're a new tourism and event business/organisation or one that's over fifty years old, ask yourself **"Why were we created?"** and **"Why do we exist?".** The answers to these questions will help you to better communicate your brand and your style of marketing.

EXAMPLE

The Blues & Rock Festival began as a humble weekend of live music in the mid 1970s, but over the decades has became one of the most popular music festivals in Australia with record growth particularly in the last six years, recording a 15% year-on-year growth since 2014, with record total attendance experienced at its 45th year celebration.

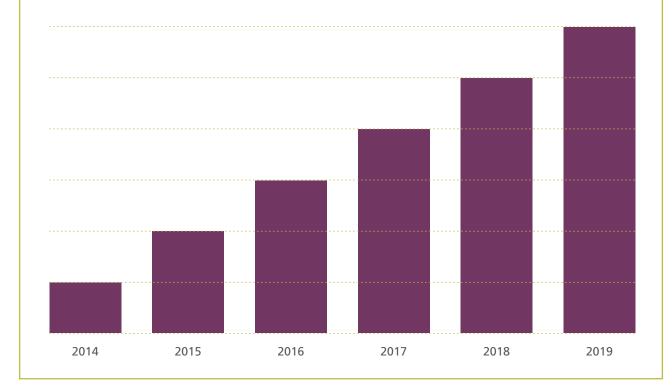
The initial organisers wanted to establish the festival as one of Australia's most original live music events.

Today the festival organisers continue this tradition, growing the festival's reputation as one of Australia's most original live music events, but they also promote their region to extend length-of-stay to increase the economic impact for their local community, attracting music enthusiasts from all over Australia, in a traditionally quiet time for Wooloolabah.

During the festival period, Wooloolabah and our region experiences some of its highest sales, and many accommodation providers report 100% capacity.

The Festival sells on average 2,500 tickets, with 170 performers participating live and over 180 locals participate in the Festival.

The Festival is a not-for-profit, incorporated association, that reinvests any surplus into future event programming, to ensure the festival and its offerings are constantly revitalised to meet changing consumer demands.



COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

It's always healthy to keep an eye out on other like-minded festivals and/or events, businesses and tourism organisations and benchmark yourself against them to see how you're performing in the marketplace. This could be as simple as comparing how many followers you have on your social media channels and if your prices are comparable in the marketplace.

THE VALUE OF A COMPETITOR ANALYSIS:

- The competitor analysis will identify consumer and event trends, providing you with opportunities to reinvigorate your tourism and event business/ organisation to meet and exceed comparative standards.
- Helps identify a unique selling point, making your event different to competitors to assist with marketing.
- Identify what a competitor is doing effectively and where they are falling short.
- Reading customer reviews reveals what visitors are looking for and consumer and market trends.
- Provides a benchmark to measure your growth.
- Identify gaps in the market to develop new event experiences.

HINT: TO HELP YOU DO A COMPETITIVE SCAN, IDENTIFY 3-5 LIKE-MINDED EVENTS OF A SIMILAR SIZE AND ONES YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASPIRE TO. CREATE A SIMPLE TABLE TO COMPARE RESULTS AND UNDERTAKE AN ONLINE REVIEW.

COMPETITOR NAME	EVENT/ BUSINESS A	EVENT/ BUSINESS B	EVENT/ BUSINESS C
DATE			
HIGHLIGHTS			
ATTENDEES			
PRICE			
# OF FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS			





One of the most important parts of your Marketing Strategy is to gain an insight into your visitors. The more you understand your customers, the easier it will be to meet their needs and market to them.

Understanding your audience and knowing the persona of your key target market will allow you to effectively promote the event to people that are most likely to attend. Some of the key characteristics of gaining visitor insights to develop your target market include demographics such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Occupation
- Marital status
- Income level
- Special interests
- Education level
- Geographic location
- Ethnic background

APPLE & GRAPE FESTIVAL, STANTHORPE



HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

PAST VISITORS

- Examine data from past visitors.
- Where did they come from?
- How did they purchase tickets/products?
- Did they buy single or family tickets?
- Did they buy one or multi-day tickets?
- Review your social media insights.
- Use Google Analytics to understand the effectiveness of your marketing and where people are from.

COMPETITION

If you haven't staged this type of experience before, look at similar events, properties and visitor experiences and their visitation.

- What does their website look like?
- Which social media platforms do they use and how to they promote on social media?
- What comments and engagement are social media posts receiving?
- What content are they using?

INDUSTRY RESEARCH

- Talk to people in the industry to identify how they market, who they market to and how effective it is.
- Refer to *Tourism & Events Qld High Value Travellers* research to gain an understanding into the needs and travel trends of particular markets you may wish to target (e.g., road trippers, caravan and camping, food & wine).

SURVEY

- Develop a simple 5-10 question survey to identify:
- Age and gender.
- Lifecycle stage.
- How they heard about the event/experience.
- How they travelled to the event/experience.
- How often they have attended your event/experience.
- How long they will stay.
- How much they will spend while they are in the region.
- What other attractions will they visit?
- What type of accommodation they booked.

WHY DO THEY ATTEND YOUR EVENT?

Understanding why people attend your event or engage with your tourism business or organisaton provides an opportunity for you to appeal to their interests by creating experiences to encourage repeat visitation, and insight into developing marketing content to attract them.



HINT: ONLINE TICKETING CAN PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO YOUR CUSTOMERS. IT IDENTIFIES WHERE ARE FROM, THE TYPE OF TICKETS THEY PURCHASE (SINGLE, COUPLES, FAMILIES ETC) AND SPENDING BEHAVIOUR. EVEN IF YOU ARE A FREE EVENT, IT'S AN IDEAL TOO TO MANDATE ONLINE REGISTRATION TO ASSIST WITH EVENT PLANNING.



MARKET SEGMENTS

To help you gain a greater insight into potential target markets, refer to the Tourism and Events Queensland website for information market segments, sector marketing.





HINT: IF YOU DON'T HAVE GOOD VISITOR INSIGHTS, START BY SETTING UP AN ON ONLINE VISITOR SURVEY, USING A TOOL LIKE SURVEY MONKEY. YOU CAN ASK UP TO 10 QUESTIONS ON A SURVEY FOR FREE, AND SEND IT OUT, IDEALLY VIA YOUR E-NEWSLETTER DATA BASE OF PREVIOUS ATTENDEES. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A DATA BASE, SHARE IT VIA YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM) AND CONTACTS VIA E-MAIL.

FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

SURVEY MONKEY

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS; WHAT SETS US APART

Unique selling points (USP) differentiate your event from your competition to attract visitors. A strong, recognisable USP can make you stand out from competitors allowing you to leverage the USP in your marketing strategy. It's often the "hook" to attract people to your event.

When identifying your USP you will need to know everything about your visitors:

- What do they want?
- How can your event, property or visitor experience deliver on their wants?
- What will motivate them to visit?
- Why will they choose your event/festival over another?

Often, it's your customers, visitor feedback and reviews which will help you to determine your unique selling point.

The secret is not to overcomplicate your USP. Keep it simple.



CONSIDER YOUR DESTINATION

A unique selling point often relates to the cultural heritage, terrain and geography where your event is located.

When further developing your unique selling point, your brand personality and colour, consider the natural and cultural environment of your location.



BRAND POSITIONING + PERSONALITY

Your event brand is more than a mere logo. It's the personality and soul, often tying closely to why the event was created.

If communicated and promoted well, branding is a powerful tool in the marketing of events.

To help you articulate and market your event brand, add the following information in your Marketing Strategy.

WHAT IS YOUR BRAND?

Brand positioning describes how the event brand is different to competitors and what customers think about it. Brand positioning creates brand associations to perceive the event in a specific way.

Ask yourself, if your event was a person, how would you best describe them?

WHAT IS YOUR HERO IMAGE?

Do you have one image that depicts your event brand? Imagery and moving footage are very important in marketing your event brand. In the world of content marketing and small marketing budgets, remember "content is king".

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONALITY?

How would you describe the personality of your event brand? It could be something like:

- We are creative, colourful, artistic.
- We are family at heart, loyal, dependable, trustworthy.
- We are active, alive, sporty type who is into adventure!
- We are classic music lovers, feminine.

WHAT IS YOUR COLOUR/FONT?

Consider not only your colour, but what tone of colour and style of font depicts your brand?.

To help you choose, refer to Pantone colours (it's like a Dulux paint shop for graphic designers) and browse fonts on sites such as **Linotype**.

IN THE SIMPLEST OF TERMS, TRY AND THINK OF YOUR EVENT AS A PERSON, WITH ITS OWN DISTINCT PERSONALITY, INCLUDING LOOK, SOUND, SMELL, FEEL AND TASTE.





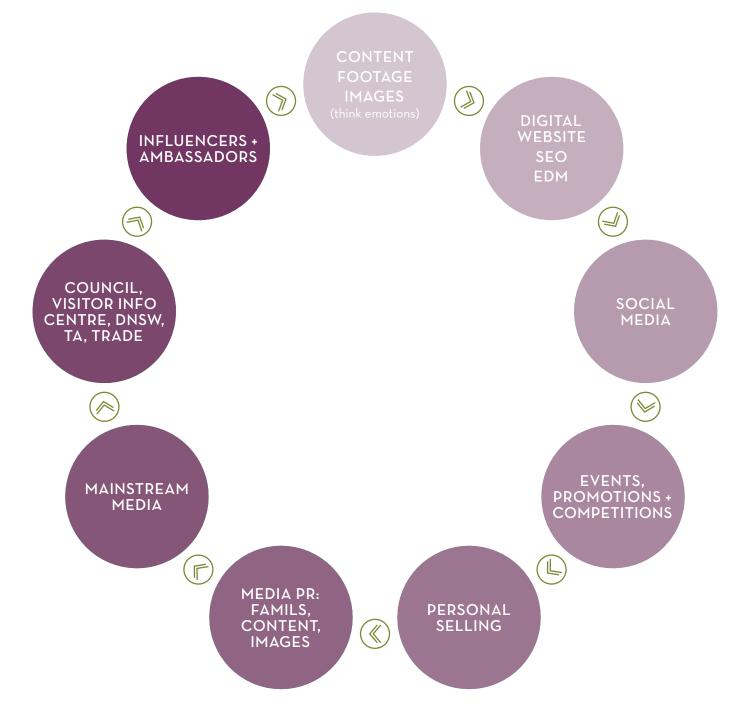
THE MARKETING MIX

It's important for your marketing to look great with perfect creative and content, but it will not have any impact if it does not reach the market.

This is where the marketing mix comes into play.

Traditionally the marketing mix relates to the Four P's: *product, price, place* and *promotion*.

The more powerful your marketing mix and consistently used, the more "cutthrough" you'll create in the marketplace. Basically, the more places a potential visitor sees, hears and reads about you, the more likely they are to have awareness of your tourism and event business/organisation, recognise you and if the message is right, choose you.



STRATEGIC GOALS + OBJECTIVES

The Marketing Strategy should align with your event Business Plan and deliver on the event's vision and goals.

In the Marketing Strategy be sure to include the your vision and goals from your Business Plan. Marketing objectives can be developed from your vision and goals.

EVENT/TOURISM VISION

EVENT/TOURISM GOALS

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

MARKETING PRIORITIES

MARKETING STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

FOR EXAMPLE; IF YOUR CORPORATE GOALS ARE SIMILAR TO THE EXAMPLES BELOW, THE MARKETING OBJECTIVES WOULD BE ALIGNED TO THE CORPORATE GOALS AND HOW YOU WILL ACHIEVE THEM.

Increase Economic	Ensure Financial
Increase Economic Benefit	Sustainability
Grow Destination Profile	Enhance Social Benefit

OBJECTIVES

The objectives are the roadmap or action to achieving your goals. Objectives are more specific than goals and are written to define measurable and tangible results.

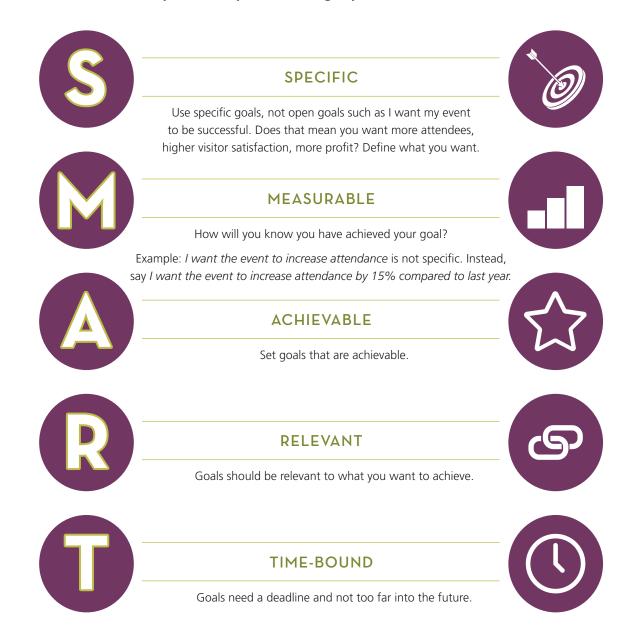
EXAMPLE GOAL Increase the economic impact by 5% YOY. MARKETING OBJECTIVE Increase event visitation/ticket sales with growth from external visitors by 5% per annum.

Other Marketing Objectives could include:

- Generate increased media publicity for the event with a reach of 120,000 people per annum.
- Grow our social media following on Facebook and Instagram by 20% in Year 1 and Year 2, with a total Facebook Reach of 500,000 per annum.

SMART MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Try to ensure your marketing objectives are "SMART".



MARKETING PRIORITIES + ACTION PLAN

To develop the priorities for your Marketing Strategy, it's important to revisit:

- Why your event was created?
- Weaknesses and opportunities identified in your marketing review, mystery shopping and competitor analysis.
- Tie your priorities directly to your event's or tourism organisation's Vision, Goals and Marketing Objectives – "What do you want your marketing to achieve?"
- Ensure your priorities are shared, not just by you, but the entire organising group of the event and your strategic partners and sponsors/investors.

Every tourism and event business/organisation's Marketing Strategy and Priorities will be different. To help you and your organising group, ensure you can achieve outcomes from the strategy. Try to keep your priorities to a minimum. Some Marketing Priorities could include:

BRAND AND DESTINATION POSITIONING

MEDIA PR

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

CONVERSION AND PACKAGING (SELLING TICKETS)

STRATEGIC MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

EXAMPLE: EACH MARKETING PRIORITY CAN THEN BE DEVELOPED INTO A ONE-PAGE ACTION PLAN, WITH CLEAR ACTIONS, DESCRIPTIONS, MONITORING, TIMING AND BUDGET.

EXAMPLE: MARKETING PRIORITY

BRAND & DESTINATION POSITIONING

To gain greater profiling for our tourism and event business/organisation, it is important to more closely align with the destination in order to achieve our event's or tourism businesses' goals and marketing objectives of:

GOAL	MARKETING OBJECTIVE
To grow tourism business or event profile To achieve greater event or tourism business/ organisation profiling and brand recognition, our marketing actions for the next three years are:	To improve brand recognition of the event/tourism business/organisation with professional branding and destination images and footage by year 3.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	MEASURED BY	TIMING	BUDGET
BRAND STYLE GUIDE	 Develop a brand style guide including: Brand description/personality Logo, font, colour palette Image/footage style examples 	Completion of style guide. Updating brand across all marketing, social and digital channels	Year 1	\$1,800
IMAGES & FOOTAGE	Annual photographic shoot and drone footage. Saved in high res on a cloud for future use. Sharing of images with local council and tourism bodies.	High quality images and footage available for media and tourism partners.	Year 1 – 3	\$3,800
BRAND INTEGRATION	Full integration of brand across all event or tourism business/organisation assets and experiences including signage, volunteer uniforms, merchandise.	Brand featured on all marketing channels, collateral and event assets.	Year 2 – 3	ТВС
DESTINATION MARKETING	Incorporate of stunning destination images and footage of our region in all aspects of marketing and media communications, including website, social media and festival collateral. Work with tourism partners to source images, content and footage.	Destination images and footage featured on website, social media channels and marketing collateral. Number of times the event or tourism business/ organisation is featured in destination marketing.	Year 1 – 2	Where possible, source existing images and footage from local council, regional and state tourism bodies.

MONITORING

The most effective Marketing Strategies are those that are regularly reviewed and monitored.

There are many ways to measure and monitor marketing. In light of the reality that many tourism and event business/ organisations within the region have limited marketing budgets, the following tips may assist in monitoring your strategy.



GOOGLE ANALYTICS

If you have a website, you can ask your webmaster to "turn-on" the Google Analytics and reports can be e-mailed automatically to you daily, weekly, monthly. You can ask to receive information like: Number of unique visits, average time per visit, referral websites and geographic source of people to your website.

If you're undertaking paid advertising and directing people to your website, Google Analytics is a highly effective way to track if the advertising is working.



SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

Nearly all social media channels have user insights. This can easily be accessed if you're an admin or editor on your social media channels. This can include not only number of followers and likes you have, but where they're geographically located, gender, age group, time of day they're engaged and total reach.

HINT: WE RECOMMEND YOU REFER TO THE TEQ BIG MARKETING GUIDE FOR MORE HANDY HINTS.

TEQ BIG MARKETING GUIDE



E-NEWSLETTER

If you have an electronic e-newsletter, e.g., using a program like Mailchimp, they too have user analytics to show how many people opened your e-newsletter, what they looked at and which stories they linked through to.

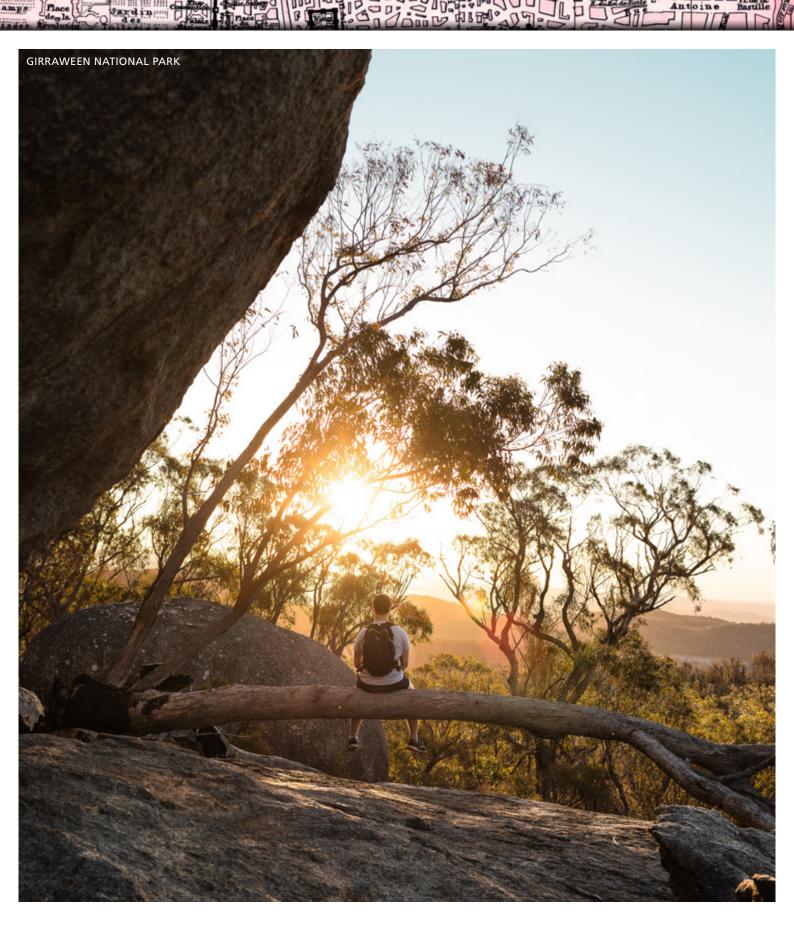


MEDIA MONITORING

There is where you monitor how many times your tourism and event business/organisation is mentioned in mainstream and/or digital media. There are some highly effective ways to track this with companies such as iSentia or Meltwater. If you don't have budget for media monitoring, if you have a large strategic partner or sponsor, ask them if their organisation has media monitoring, and if as part of their sponsorship deal, they would be willing to include in-kind media monitoring. Another cost-effective way is to keep a record of all interviews undertaken and whether they're local, state or national coverage, keep clippings and links from press and digital stories, and use "Google Alerts" to alert you when there is a mention.

GOOGLE ALERTS







Australian Government









Southern Downs A great place to live, work, play and stay.